

THE BILTMORE



NEW YORK



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*The
Biltmore*



New York

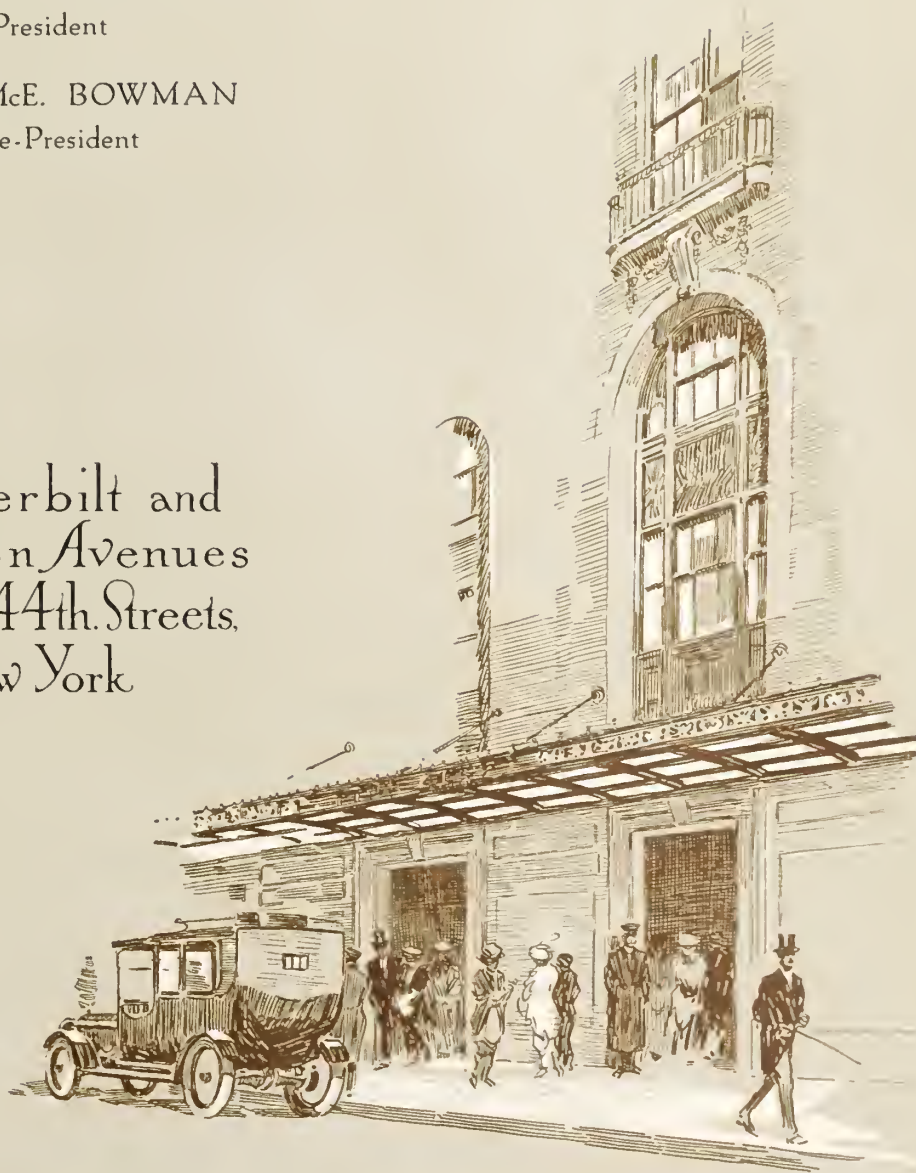
The Biltmore



GUSTAV BAUMANN
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Vice-President

Vanderbilt and
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43rd. & 44th. Streets,
New York





THE BILTMORE



The Biltmore

A LITTLE JOURNEY TO THE BILTMORE

By ELBERT HUBBARD

I'VE BEEN to a hotel. I thought I had seen hotels before, but now I know I hadn't.

The Biltmore, in New York City, is a hotel that is individual, distinct, peculiar, unique and unforgettable.

I have only one criticism to make concerning it, and that is, it exhausts my stock of adjectives. Usually you describe a thing by saying it is like something else, but this time comparisons are of no avail, words falter and language reaches its limit.

Usually, when we think of a big hotel, we think of a place of hustle and bustle, where crowds congregate, butlers butt for baggage, porters call trains, clerks clang bells, bellhops hop, and an orchestra bangs out the "Miserere."

In first-class hotels there are dazzling chandeliers, gaudy pictures, mouldings made in imitation of classic carvings, overhanging balconies, and ceilings bespangled with painted extravagance everywhere writ large. You think of the phrase of Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The riot of the senses to be found in our first-class hotels." I would not apply such a cheap phrase as "first-class" to The Biltmore—it is more than that, it is The Biltmore.

THE BILTMORE tokens a new time. The opening of this hotel is an epoch. We are living in a new age and if you want to realize this fact just visit this wonderful hostelry.

If you arrive from New England or upon the New York Central lines, the ease with which you can go to The Biltmore will be the first thing that gives you a thrill of delight. You eliminate cab drivers, taxis, guides, and the slogan, "Safety First," is superfluous. You cross no streets, run into no congestions of traffic.

When you alight from your train at the Grand Central Station, you hand your bag to a Red Cap and say, "The Biltmore." In about half a second you are deposited in a luxurious elevator, and in what seems to be half a second more the elevator stops, and you are in the office of The Biltmore.

How did you get here? It is one of the modern mysteries.

If you come to New York by other routes than those named, the location of The Biltmore is so central that you are but a few moments from station or ferry. Traveling on a railroad train will some day be a thing of the past; they will put us in a lovely little stateroom in a pneumatic tube, and somebody will press a button and before you can read your magazine your journey will be completed.

So you step into an elevator at the Grand Central and the elevator goes up and you do not realize when it stops and ceases to travel perpendicular and begins to travel horizontally.



HERE is where your senses play you false, and as for myself, I haven't worked it out yet; I only know that I said "Biltmore" to a bright-faced, dark-complexioned lad and he put me in an elevator and I arrived in the office of The Biltmore.

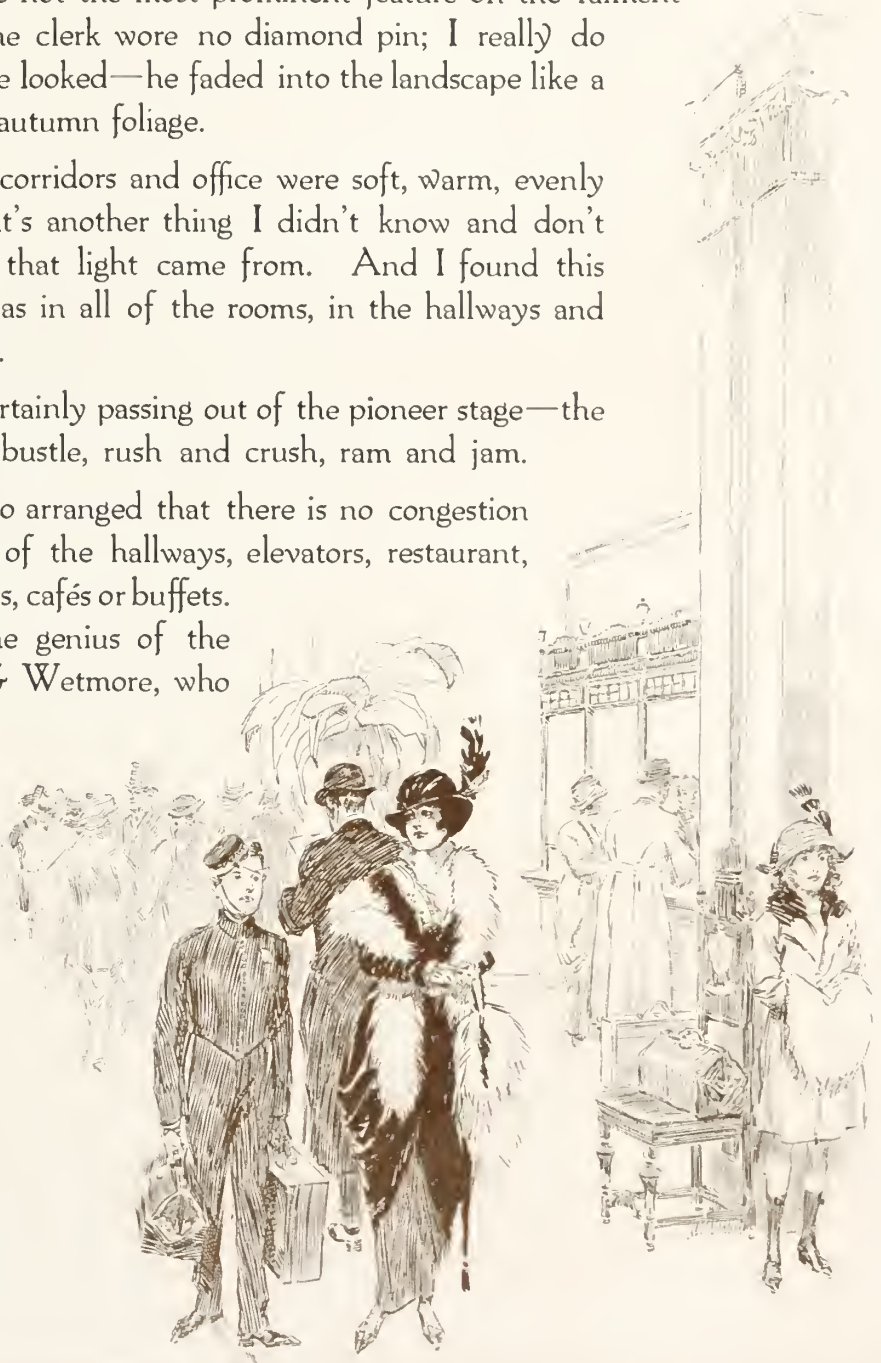
There was no fighting for my baggage, no anxiety, no jostling. At the office of The Biltmore there was no crowding around the desk, because one clerk does not wear his nerves to a frazzle trying to take care of all the guests; you can register at one of several places. The office is beautiful through its absence of gilt, gold, glare and gaudy fussiness.

Brass buttons were not the most prominent feature on the raiment of the bellboys. The clerk wore no diamond pin; I really do not remember how he looked—he faded into the landscape like a brown thrush in the autumn foliage.

The lights of the corridors and office were soft, warm, evenly distributed—and that's another thing I didn't know and don't know yet—is where that light came from. And I found this wonderful lighting was in all of the rooms, in the hallways and even in the elevators.

This country is certainly passing out of the pioneer stage—the stage of hustle and bustle, rush and crush, ram and jam.

The Biltmore is so arranged that there is no congestion or crowding in any of the hallways, elevators, restaurant, palm court, grill rooms, cafés or buffets. Here is revealed the genius of the architects, Warren & Wetmore, who have designed many of the structural wonders of New York, and they have fairly surpassed themselves in The Biltmore.





I WAS told that there were in the hotel when I was there over three thousand people, but I ran into no crowd. The whole place is noise-proof and dustproof. It is run on rubber tires with ball bearings.

The Biltmore is perfectly ventilated, the air in every room and hall being replenished every few moments, and this without the opening of windows. The air that comes into your room is washed as if by a summer shower, warmed or cooled to a certain temperature before it is sent on its journey, and no matter what the weather is outside, here it is always May-time.

The great room called the restaurant, the gentlemen's café, the grill room and peace-impelling lounge are all outside rooms, where the light from the out-of-doors enters, and this is true of every one of the thousand rooms in the house.

Electricity has never been used so thoroughly as it has in this building, so I am told by one of the great engineers of the world. We speak of a building being wired for electric lights, but here is the only building in the world that is completely wired for service.

There is in the office of the hotel an arrangement which shows when a servant is at work in any room. And it is a rule of the hotel that a guest is never sent to a room when one of the servants is there. This is arranged by a little system of flashlights.



The Lounge

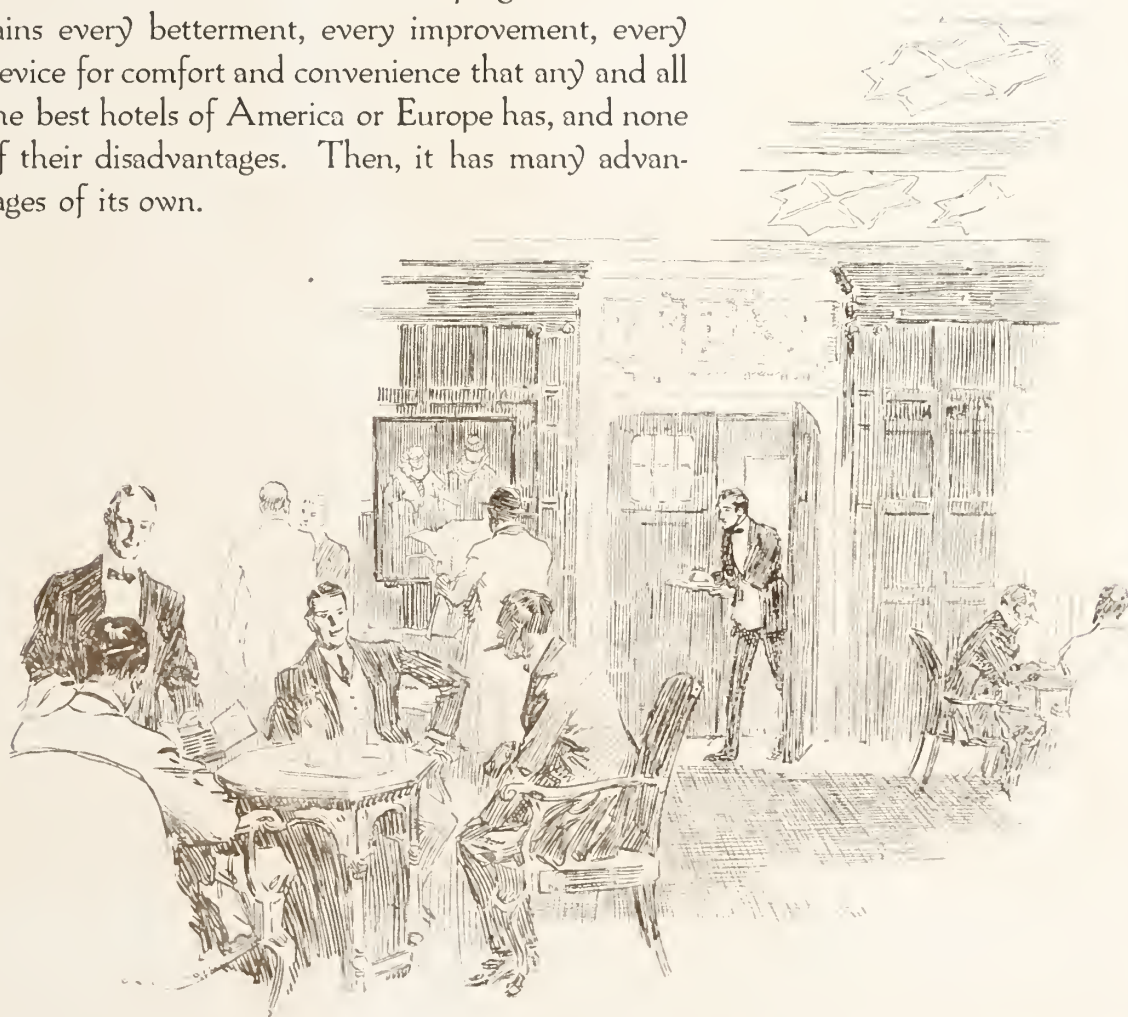


THERE is the tel-autograph system, which conveys written messages from one part of the hotel to another, the dictaphone system, and, of course, the regular telephones, by which you can talk to the office, to the city, or to Buffalo, Chicago, Boston or St. Louis at will from your room. In addition, you talk, of course, to any other guest in the hotel that you care to.

There are pneumatic tubes that carry laundry bundles and a vacuum cleaning service that picks up the dust and carries it out.

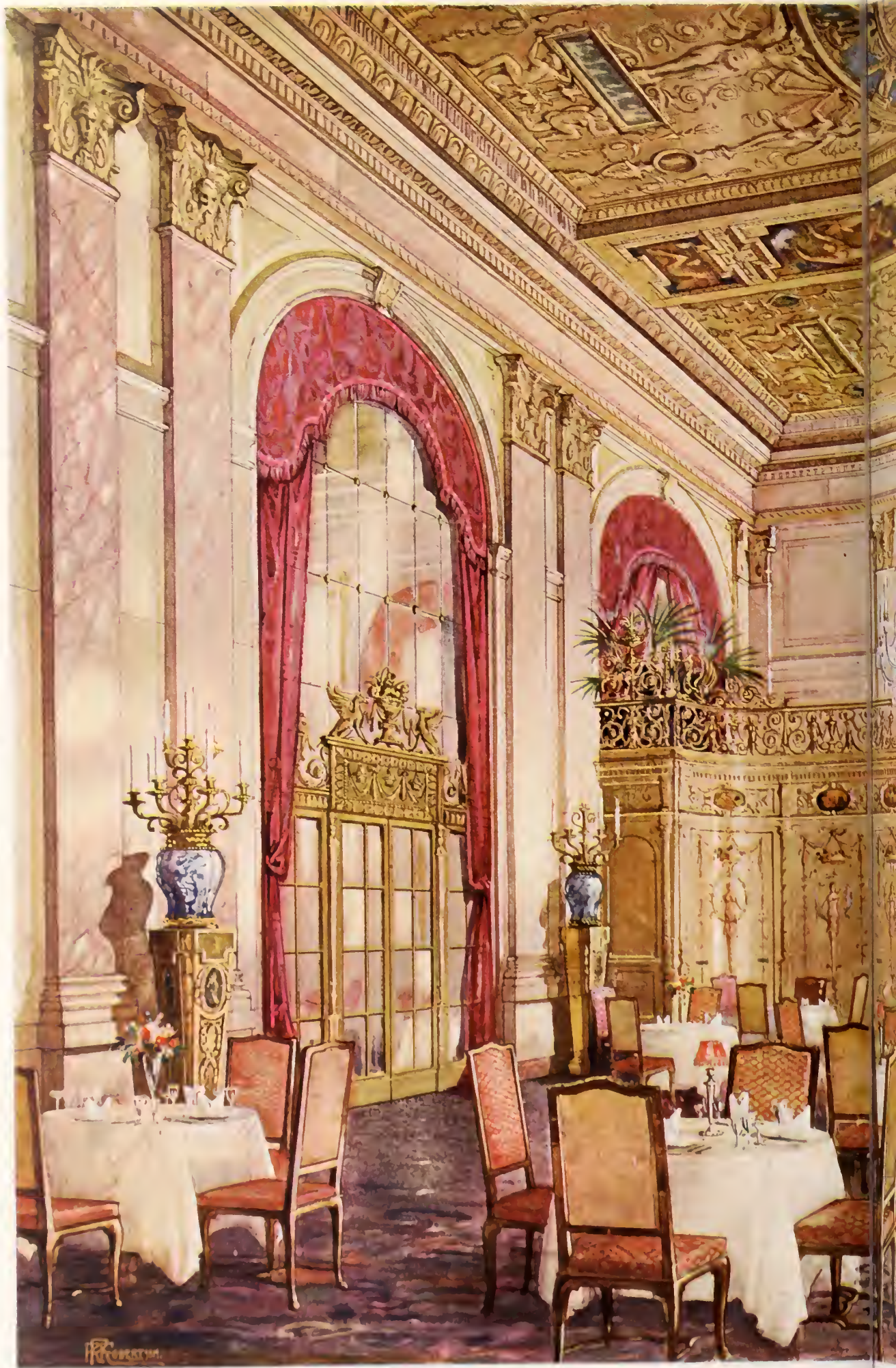
Every known device has been installed by which dust is kept out of the hotel, and a scientist of note tells me that the atmosphere in any of The Biltmore rooms—office, dining room, buffets, retiring rooms or bedrooms—would show a far greater purity from the microbes of dust and bacteria of disintegration than outside air, even in the country, unless it were immediately after a great fall of snow. Thus it really looks as if when we want to get absolutely sanitary conditions in future, we will have to go to the city and not to the country).

The Biltmore Hotel is the last word in hotel creation. It is the last white milestone on the road to progress. It contains every betterment, every improvement, every device for comfort and convenience that any and all the best hotels of America or Europe has, and none of their disadvantages. Then, it has many advantages of its own.

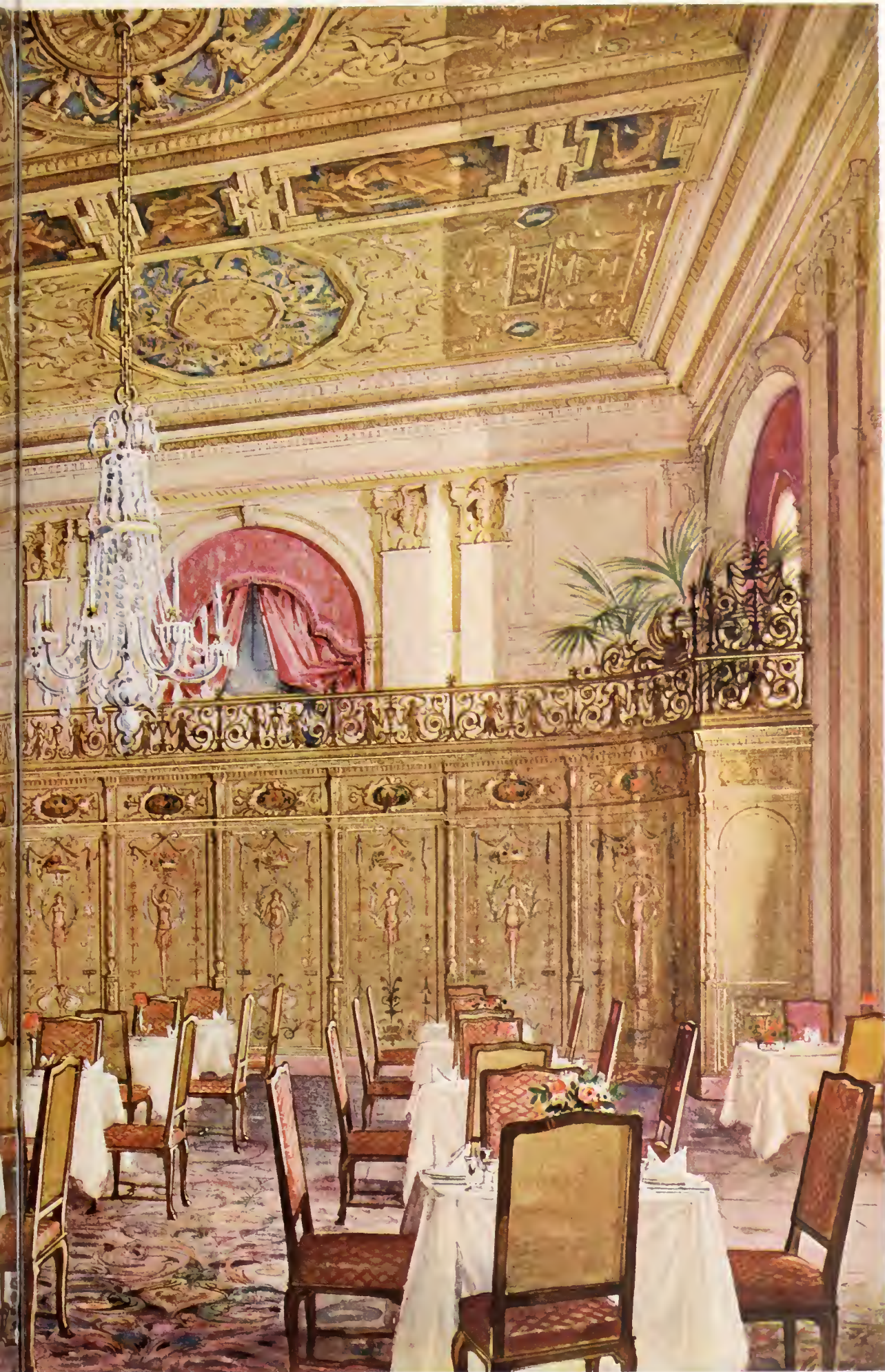




The Restaurant



H. R. ...



The
Restaurant

THE big work of the world has always engaged the genius of the biggest men. When war was the most important thing in the world the big men were warriors, and so ancient history swings around the men who could kill and destroy most. Time goes on, and we find the big men of the world are painters or sculptors; men like Michael Angelo, who was the biggest intellect of his time. Also, comes Leonardo Da Vinci, scientist, engineer, architect — writing poetry, painting pictures, modeling statuary. And about the same time in different parts of the world, there were men explorers. They sailed the seas in search of unknown shores; and we have Columbus turning the prow of his caravel to the West, and persistently sailing on and on. Then comes La Salle, Marquette, Joliet, fired with religious zeal — men intent on doing a work never before attempted.

But today the great modern prophets are architects, electricians, builders, railroad men, manufacturers, distributors. He who writes the history of our time must deal with these.

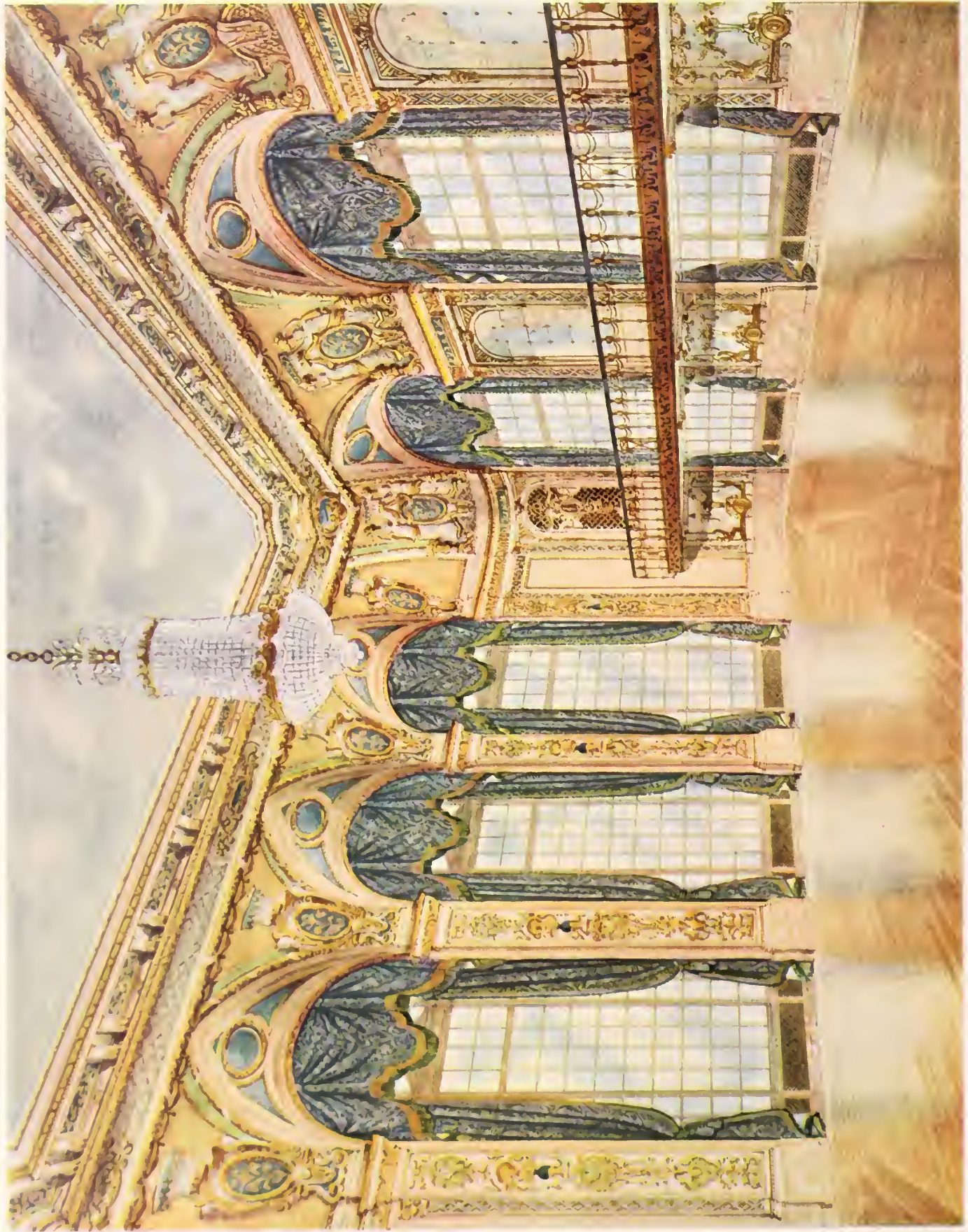


IN THE building of The Biltmore we find the combined genius of the greatest men of the age collaborating, and the net result is a home for the traveler that is the safest, sanest, most complete, convenient and luxurious institution ever thought out by human brains, and constructed with human hands. In its furnishings and decorations it is pleasing to the most highly sensitive and cultivated taste, for all of these things were designed by the master minds in such work, Messrs. W. & J. Sloane, of New York.

All of the water used for bathing purposes is soft water, the water being filtrated by the Permutit system, a wonderful device evolved by German brains—the brains that produce music, philosophy and scientific nucleus. By this system all of the mineral salts that may be in the water are removed, and nothing is added, so we have rain water just as you would catch it in the clouds if you went up in a balloon and got it for yourself before it was contaminated by the atmosphere. The Biltmore is the first hotel in America to adopt this soft-water system.



A
Corner
of the
Ball Room



ALL LAUNDRY for guests and house service is done on the premises with soft water, which adds to the life of the fabrics. A beauty doctor, with whom I am on pleasant speaking terms, tells me that this soft water also adds greatly to the beauty of the complexion, and is absolutely hygienic, which hard water is certainly not.

There are twenty-six stories in The Biltmore Hotel, but there is really no choice in the rooms, so far as altitude is concerned. There are a thousand bedrooms and nine hundred and fifty private baths. No wall-paper of any sort is used in any room of this hotel, it having been discovered that wall-paper, while more or less beautiful, is unsanitary.

All baseboards are marble, and the elevator shafts are solid stone. There is a Louis XIV ball and banquet room on the nineteenth floor, seating six hundred people, surrounded with a royal suite of reception and supper rooms. This ball room has a gallery and twelve exits and entrances, and is a salon befitting a royal palace. In addition to this, there is a smaller banquet and music room on the fourth floor, which would dazzle the eyes of any one unaccustomed to luxurious establishments.

The construction of the exterior of the building is such as to permit on the sixth floor a large pergola and out-of-door garden, with walks, flower beds and ornamental shrubs—an ideal spot for summer dining, amid floral surroundings and far above the strident noises of the city. This, like the banquet hall, is supplied with an independent kitchen—and, speaking of kitchens, please note that every one of these indispensable adjuncts to a hotel are above ground in The Biltmore, and not placed in illy-ventilated cellars, as in most hotels.

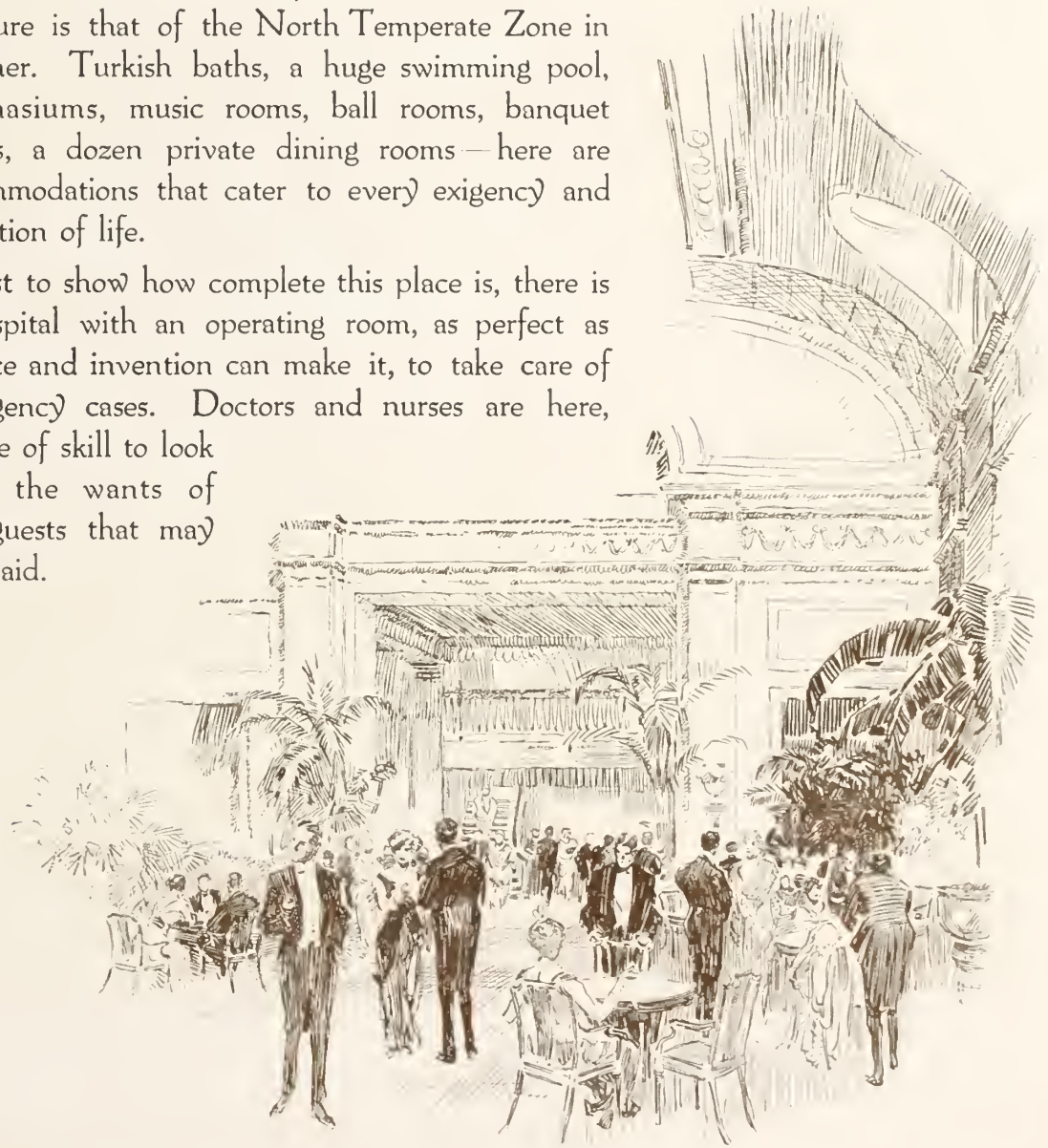


The
Palm
Court



NERVE irritation is reduced to the minimum at The Biltmore. If you like music at your meals you can go to a dining room where a Polish professor produces sweet symphonies. If, like Richard Mansfield, you prefer to eat in silence, you are accommodated. Some philosopher has said that there is a vast difference between eating dinner and dining. So there is. You dine at The Biltmore. The china is unlike the usual hotel ware and more like that which you find on a private table of refinement. The napery and the Gorham silverware, chaste in design and pattern, added to the attention of trained waiters, all tend to enhance your enjoyment of the food, which has been prepared by chefs known on both sides of the Atlantic. The whole building is a place of rest, quiet as the country, beautiful as the Little Trianon at Versailles. Summer heat can never reach it, nor winter's cold penetrate it. The temperature is that of the North Temperate Zone in summer. Turkish baths, a huge swimming pool, gymnasiums, music rooms, ball rooms, banquet rooms, a dozen private dining rooms—here are accommodations that cater to every exigency and condition of life.

Just to show how complete this place is, there is a hospital with an operating room, as perfect as science and invention can make it, to take care of emergency cases. Doctors and nurses are here, people of skill to look after the wants of the guests that may need aid.





LADIES' RECEPTION ROOM

THE average guest would never know anything about the hospital. You only find it when you require it or search it out. And, while The Biltmore eminently stands for health, yet accident is provided against.

And then there is something more, because a hotel is more than a mass of stone and concrete and a tangle of pipes and wires, and rooms, and dishes, and pictures, and statuary; yes, there is something else, and that is element of human service. We have been told that corporations have no souls, but a thing that hasn't a soul is dead. At The Biltmore there is a healthful, friendly atmosphere, a gentleness, a kindness, a courtesy and a high intelligence that never obtrudes, but which is always right there when you need it. And this friendliness and devotion to human needs is a quality that you cannot omit. The Biltmore, like paradise, is a condition of mind. Also, it is an environment.

The assistants, clerks and help are all picked men and women, tried and tested, and in order to get this select quality of employees I hear that the management is paying more than the average hotel man pays. But in return he gets a big and undivided service from his helpers.

Some people imagine that the prices at The Biltmore are of a kind that can only be met by royalty. This is a mistake; the prices—why, they are just what you have been paying elsewhere, when you flattered yourself you were putting up first class.



THE BILTMORE is practically a part of the Grand Central Terminal, and the Grand Central Terminal is the best and most complete building ever constructed.

The palaces and temples of ancient Greece and Rome cannot be compared in completeness with the Grand Central and its "Civic Center."

Here is a capital in itself—finer far than ever a king enjoyed. Some time I am going to take a month and get acquainted with the Grand Central Civic Center. As it is, all I can do now is just to put down here a few little hints about this most complete of modern hostelrys.



The Biltmore



ANY one who does not know The Biltmore Hotel is lagging behind in life's procession. It is a part of the education of every man and woman to know what the big men of the world are doing, and what civilization is supplying. Only thus are we able to know in what direction we are traveling and how fast we are moving. And so my advice is to every citizen of America, or of Europe as well, is, when you are in New York, do not fail to see The Biltmore Hotel. It is a place of safety, sanity, sanitation, health and luxury, where use and beauty blend, and the ideal place for temporary or permanent abode. Here courtesy, kindness, friendship and goodwill smile you a welcome. You will be glad when you arrive at The Biltmore; you will be sorry when you have to go; and you will look forward with fond anticipation to a return visit.





